

By the United States in Congress assembled. January 2, 1786

By the UNITED STATES in CONGRESS assembled. JANUARY 2, 1786.

ORDERED, THAT the secretary of Congress report the number of states which have complied in whole or in part with the revenue system of April 18, 1783;—the recommendation of Congress of the same date, for an alteration of the 8th of the articles of confederation;—and the act of the 30th of April, 1784, recommending the vesting of certain commercial powers in Congress.

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF CONGRESS, JAN. 4, 1786.

In obedience to the orders of Congress, the secretary of Congress reports,

THAT the revenue system of the 18th April, 1783, consists of two parts.

First, a recommendation to the states to invest the United States in Congress assembled, with a power to levy for the use of the United States, certain duties upon goods imported into the said states, from any foreign port, island or plantation, to be applied to the discharge of the interest and principal of the debts contracted on the faith of the United States, agreeably to the resolution of 16th December, 1782, and not to be continued for a longer term than twenty-five years. The collectors of the duties to be appointed by the states respectively, but when appointed, to be amenable to, and removeable by the United States in Congress assembled alone. And in case any state shall not make such appointment within one month after notice given for that purpose, the appointment may be made by the United States in Congress assembled.

With this part of the act, the following states have complied. New-Hampshire, by act of 1st and 2d of January, 1784. Massachusetts, by do. 30th October, 1783. Connecticut, by do.

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May, 1784. New-Jersey, by do. 11th June, 1783. Pennsylvania, by do. 23d September, 1783. Virginia, by do. October, 1783. ch. 31s North-Carolina, by do. June, 1784. South-Carolina, by do. 21st March, 1784.

Rhode-Island, in the session of their legislature, in the spring of 1785, passed an act for levying the duties pointed out by Congress, but have therein enacted, that the collectors be appointed by and amenable to their general assembly; and that, of the money arising from the duties, a certain sum, viz. 8000 dollars, shall be appropriated in their treasury, for the payment of the interest of that state's proportion of the foreign debt of the United States, and paid to the order of Congress; and that the surplus of the duties, and the amount of other taxes ordered by the said act, shall be appropriated to the payment of the interest of the internal debt of the United States due within that state. This act to take effect when the other states in the union agree to the said impost to the acceptation of Congress, and have provided other adequate funds for compleating their quota of 1,500,000 dollars, according to the requisition of Congress of the 18th of April, 1783, but with this proviso, and upon this express condition—"that no duties shall be collected upon articles imported into any state, upon which the said duties have been paid in any other state; and that no duty shall be imposed by any one state upon the citizens of another state, either upon imported articles having paid the duties as aforesaid, or upon any articles of the growth, produce or manufacture of the United States."

The state of Maryland, in June, 1782, pursuant to acts of Congress of the 3d and 7th of February, 1781, passed "An act to authorise the United States in Congress assembled, to impose and levy a duty of five per cent. on imported foreign goods, and on all prizes and prize goods, for the payment of the debts contracted by Congress during the war:"—And in the November session, 1784, their legislature passed a supplement to the aforementioned act, whereby it should take effect as soon as twelve states, including that state, vested Congress with similar powers; but it does not appear that they have passed any act pursuant to the recommendation of Congress of the 18th of April, 1783.

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Delaware, it is said, has passed an act conformable to the recommendation above mentioned; but no official information thereof has yet been transmitted to this office or to the board of treasury.

The second part of the revenue system of the 18th of April, 1783, consists of a recommendation to the several states to establish, for a term limited to twenty-five years, and to appropriate to the discharge of the interest and principal of the debts contracted on the faith of the United States for supporting the war, substantial and effectual revenues, of such nature as they may judge most convenient, for supplying their respective proportions of 1,500,000 dollars, annually, exclusive of the aforementioned duties.

With this part of the act the following states have complied. New-Jersey, by their act of 20th December, 1783. Pennsylvania, by do. September, 1783. North-Carolina, by do. June, 1784.

Rhode-Island, in the act above mentioned, has enacted, that a tax of one Spanish silver milled dollars upon every hundred acres of land within that state, upon every male poll in the state of twenty-one years of age, and upon every horse or mare of two years old and upwards, shall be annually laid, levied and collected, and that the amount thereof shall be appropriated to the payment of the interest of the internal debt of the United States, due within that state, with the proviso and on the express condition above set forth.

The act of the 18th of April, 1783, also recommends to the states an alteration in the 8th of the articles of confederation and perpetual union, for ascertaining, with more convenience and certainty, the proportions to be supplied by the states respectively to the common treasury, and the several states are advised to authorise their respective delegates to subscribe and ratify the same as part of the said instrument of union, in the words therein mentioned.

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With this part of the act the following states have complied. Massachusetts, by their act of the 2d July, 1785. Connecticut, by do. May, 1783. New-York, by do. April, 1785. New-Jersey, by do. June, 1783. Pennsylvania, by do. Aug. 1783. Maryland, by do. Nov. 1784. Virginia, by do. May, 1784. North-Carolina, by do. June, 1784.

By the act of the 30th of April, 1784, it is recommended to the legislatures of the several states, to vest the United States in Congress assembled, for the term of fifteen years, with the power——

1. To prohibit any goods, wares or merchandise from being imported into or exported from any of the states, in vessels belonging to or navigated by the subjects of any power with whom these states shall not have formed treaties of commerce.
2. To prohibit the subjects of any foreign state, kingdom or empire, unless authorised by treaty, from importing into the United States any goods, wares by merchandises which are not the produce or manufacture of the dominions of the sovereign whose subjects they are.

In pursuance of this act, New-Hampshire has invested Congress, for fifteen years, with full power to regulate the trade of the United States, as they may judge best calculated to promote the weal and prosperity thereof, the fees, profits and emoluments arising from their regulations, to be appropriated to the sole use of discharging public debts. See act 22d June, 1785.* Massachusetts has passed a law in the terms of the recommendation, 1st July, 1784. Rhode-Island has empowered their delegates to agree to and ratify any article empowering the United States in Congress assembled, to regulate, restrain, or prohibit the importation of all foreign goods in any but American vessels. See act passed in February session, 1785; and by an additional act, passed October, 1785, the delegates are empowered to agree to any article by which the United States in Congress assembled shall be solely empowered to regulate the trade and commerce of the respective states, and citizens thereof with each other, and to regulate, restrain, or prohibit the importation

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of all foreign goods in American vessels for twenty-five years. Connecticut has passed an act in the terms of the recommendation, May, 1785. New-York the same, 4th April, 1785. Pennsylvania the same, 15th December, 1784. Maryland the same, November, 1784. Virginia the same, 3d May, 1784. North-Carolina the same, 2d June, 1784.